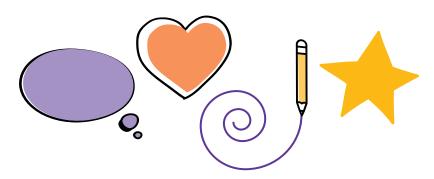
ParentCorps



Your ParentCorps Guide



Together We: Parent. Share. Learn. Grow.

weareparentcorps.org



Express yourself. Write. Draw. This book is yours!

What sessions are you most looking forward to exploring?

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Throughout this Guide you will see these sections:



Reflect: This section provides an opportunity to reflect on our values, beliefs and experiences on a given topic. Sometimes the questions ask you to think back to your own childhood, and others focus on your current experience as a caregiver.

LEARN



Learn: Here, you will find specific information about the session topic, from the lens of child development or relevant parenting strategies.



Did You Know?: This section includes helpful information from the latest research as well as tips to help you with each topic.



Practice and Plan: Here, we share details on implementing a parenting strategy and invite you to try it at home.



Self-Care: Parenting is hard. This section shares self-care prompts and activities that invite you to take a minute for yourself.



Affirmation: Take some time to affirm yourself by completing these self-affirmation exercises.

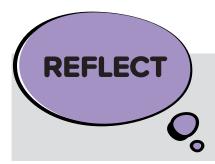


Express Yourself: Use this space to write and draw anything that you'd like.

Session 1

WELCOME

Welcome to ParentCorps! Every family is unique. We come from different cultures, speak different languages, and live in different communities. ParentCorps is based on the belief that parents (and grandparents or other caregivers who are raising children) are the most important part of a young child's world. Parenting is a very personal experience. There is not one right way to do things. We have our own values and beliefs about how to raise children. When we share our hopes and joys as well as the struggles of parenting, we can learn from each other. We hope, through ParentCorps, that you find opportunities for connection, community building, reflection, and support.





What are your parenting strengths? Where do you feel successful in your caregiving?

What parts of parenting are you struggling with?

LEARN



ParentCorps has a set of values that guide what we do and how we do it. Here's how we hope these values show up in our work with caregivers.

Community

We build our community with parents and caregivers.

Culture

In that community, we reflect on our culture and our experiences raising children.

Evidence

We share parenting strategies that are backed by evidence.

Collaboration

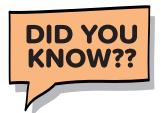
We collaborate through group sharing and learning from one another.

Autonomy

We firmly believe that you are all the experts of your children, and it is for each of you to decide which strategies work best for your children and families.

Fairness

Everyone should get what they uniquely need in order to have an opportunity for success. Committing to fairness requires that we acknowledge the ways certain communities have and continue to experience hardships and we work to counteract this.





Research shows that children thrive in environments that are safe, nurturing and predictable. These are some examples of what it means for an environment to be safe, nurturing and predictable for a child.

Nurturing

Child is seen, heard and accepted.

Child is encouraged and supported in learning new skills.

Safe

Child's physical needs are met.

Child is protected from

Predictable

Child knows what to expect day to day.

Child understands rules and how adults will respond.

ParentCorps





We all have values and beliefs that matter to us. Our values guide our beliefs, and our beliefs guide our behavior. We believe that who we are is how we parent, how we act, how we are there for one another, and ultimately how we are there for our children.

We invite you to reflect on what matters most to you in your parenting.

Purpose (Responsibility) Openness Service Health **Achievement Acceptance Cooperation** Mindfulness **Friendship Knowledge Order** Beauty **Self-Control** Humor Faith Stability Simplicity **Passion** Family Nurture **Honesty Forgiveness** Courtesy **Excitement Authenticity Compassion Fitness Tolerance Justice Generosity** Flexibility Safety Risk **Comfort** Dependability Independence **Tradition**





Self-care may be different for each of us. Self-care may mean self-reflection, like considering how we feel, think, believe and act. It may mean alone time or going for a walk. There is value in thinking about your own self-care. When we care for ourselves, we have the energy to take care of those around us – and then they can be there for us when we need support.

We also believe in **community care**. Our responsibility as a community is to use all the strengths and opportunities we have to care for one another. This means that as we raise our own children to be healthy and happy, we also consider how to support other children and families in our community.

Think about a time when you felt cared for.



Complete this sentence...

I am proud of myself for

•

Session 2

CULTURE & PARENTING

Many factors influence how we parent and care for our children. One of the biggest is **culture**. When we say culture, we are referring to the combination of **values**, **beliefs**, **languages**, **clothing**, **food**, **traditions**, **music and history** common to a group of people. We all belong to a larger culture, and often, more than one.

In addition to our larger culture, we all have our own family culture. Those are the ideas, values, and traditions that we inherit from our families and ancestors, and that we create for ourselves with our children. When we say family, that may mean our children, our family of origin, as well as chosen family or community.





How do your family and your community influence the choices you make about raising your children?

What parts of your culture are you sharing with your children?

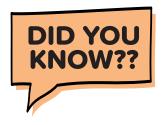
3 Where do we learn about raising children?

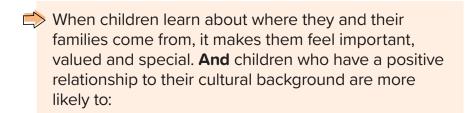
LEARN



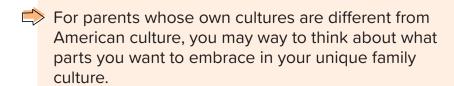
Three and four year-old children are developing their sense of self. They're noticing differences in culture, such as food and clothing, and differences in how people around them speak, look, and act.

Studies show that children who have a strong sense of self, rooted in their cultural background, are more likely to do well in school, have higher self-esteem, and get along well with others. They are also more resilient in the face of hardships.





- Do well in school.
- Have higher self-esteem.
- 3 Get along well with others.







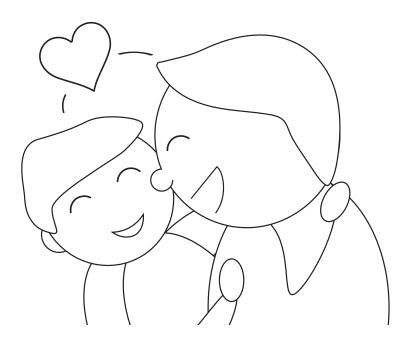
There are many ways to share your culture with your children and to support them to develop a positive sense of self. Below are some suggestions to try at home.

Circle ones that you are already doing or would like to try.

- Cooking meals from your culture
- Showing your children pictures from your hometown or home country
- Telling stories about your childhood or your family
- Speaking your native language
- Engaging in or celebrating religious or spiritual traditions
- Introducing them to important cultural figures
- Playing music, sharing games, sports and/or dances from your culture



Think about someone you're grateful to have in your life, and why. How do they make you feel? How do they support you and your well-being?





Complete this sentence...

When I reflect on my culture, one thing that makes me proud is



Express yourself. Write. Draw. This book is yours!

Session 3

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & SETTING GOALS

Every day, young children are **learning new skills in different areas of development**. They may be learning how to communicate and build relationships, how to solve problems and understand emotions, or even how fast their bodies can move.

As young children are learning new skills, it can be helpful to **set goals**. Setting goals helps to focus on specific skills you want your child to learn. It also helps children and caregivers keep track of all of the progress they're making.

Every caregiver has unique goals for their children based on what's most important to them (their values), the ways they were raised, their culture, and their life experiences.





What are some examples of skills your child is learning right now?

2 What is a skill your child is struggling to learn on their own?

LEARN

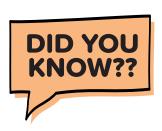


Children tend to progress through predictable developmental stages, with different behaviors and skills associated with each phase. At the same time, **all children are unique**. They have different temperaments and biological makeups. Even if they experience the same exact event or grow up in the same family, each child will have their own individual responses.

It is completely typical for children of the same age to have different levels of skill and mastery in different areas of development. For example, one young child may excel at managing their big emotions, but struggle to hop. Another young child may be hopping around in circles, but challenged by dealing with big emotions.

Four and five-year-old children are often:

- Learning how to identify, express, and manage their feelings, and recognize feelings in others.
- (2) Building on conversational skills.
- 3 Learning the **foundational skills** of reading and math.
- Developing their **physical abilities** like holding a pencil or getting dressed independently.
- **5 Developing a sense of who they are**, where they are from, their likes and dislikes, etc.



- Certain goals will be simpler than others for your child to master. One way to help them achieve bigger goals is by breaking them down into smaller steps, or mini goals. This can help children feel successful as they progress toward the big goal.
- As adults, we often need support to reach our goals. While children are still growing and developing, they too will need a lot of support to reach goals. This may look like using reminders or doing each task alongside them at first. No matter the goal, big celebrations of even the smallest steps can help build up their confidence.





Fill in this chart to help set goals for your child. Consider whether what you'd like to see is realistic for their developmental stage. Then, break larger goals into smaller steps and plan how you will support them.

Some example goals:

- Get dressed independently Take deep breaths when angry
- Put away toys before bedtime Use utensils to eat

What are some goals you want to set for your child?	What are the smaller steps that they need to work on to get there?	What can you do to support them?
GOALS	STEPS	SUPPORT
	•	
	2	
	3	
	0	
	2	
	3	

Share goals with other adults raising and caring for your child.

Praise your child when you see them working towards the goals you set.



BOX BREATHING

Some benefits of box breathing:

- Helps you cope when feeling overwhelmed
- Helps you to sleep when you are having insomnia
- Helps to control hyperventilation as you breathe rhythmically
- Helps you refocus during a busy or stressful day

Box breathing instructions

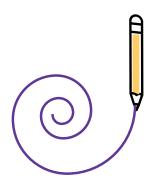
- Breathe out slowly, releasing all the air from your lungs.
- 2 Breathe in through your nose as you slowly count to four in your head; be conscious of how the air fills your lungs and stomach.
- 3 Hold your breath for a count of four.
- (4) Exhale for another count of four.
- **5** Breathe in for a count of four.
- 6 Repeat for three to four rounds.



Complete this sentence...

One goal I would like to set for myself is

2



Express yourself. Write. Draw. This book is yours!

Session 4

ROUTINES

A routine is a consistent and predictable way of doing daily tasks. It's a list of things to be done, when they need to be done, and who will do them.

Routines can be especially helpful in **the morning** as you're getting children ready for school and in **the evenings** as you're getting children to bed.

Routines provide caregivers with more time to attend to their own needs. If children get to bed quickly or are more independent in the mornings, the adults caring for them have more opportunities to care for themselves.





When you hear the word routine, what comes to mind? What goes into a routine?

What can be challenging about routines?

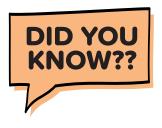
3 What is working for you in your daily routines?

Are there any parts of your weekly routine that show your children your values or highlight your culture?

LEARN



Young children feel safe when their daily lives are predictable, when they know "what comes next." A sense of safety helps kids feel more confident and more willing to try new or difficult tasks. Routines help children learn new responsibilities, become more independent, and make life easier for caregivers.



- Research shows that **getting enough sleep** is strongly connected to how well children are able to: pay attention and do well in school, manage their feelings and behavior, and grow up healthy and strong. Children do some of their best growing while they are asleep. Young children, three to five years of age, need 10-13 hours of sleep per day, including both nighttime rest and naps.
- It is normal for children to get upset when their routine changes. When we as caregivers do our best to stay calm and explain the changes, children can learn how to be flexible and manage their emotions.





Here is an example of a morning routine chart!

Name: Maite				
WHAT	WHEN	wно		
brush teeth	7:00	Maite with Mami		
put on clothes	7:10	Maite with Papa		
eat breakfast	7:20	Maite with Mami		

Morning Routine

Answer these questions to help create your own routine charts with your child. Add pictures or drawings and hang the charts on the wall at your child's eye level.



What does your child need to do in the morning before school? (Get dressed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, put on shoes...)

What time does your child need to wake up in order to get all these things done?

What does your child need to do in the evening before bed? (Clean up toys, take a bath, put on pajamas, brush teeth, read a book...) What time does your child need to go to bed in order to get enough sleep?

What order do these steps need to go in and how long would you say each will take?

4 Who will help your child with each step of this routine?

5 What can you do to motivate your child to complete the more challenging steps in the routine?

Share routines with other adults raising and caring for your child.



Where is one place in your routine that you can build in some self-care this week?



Complete this sentence...

This week, I am proud of myself for

Session 5

MEALTIME

Mealtime for children is **more than just about eating**. Mealtime is an opportunity for children to **explore new foods**, **build relationships**, and learn about their family and culture.

Mealtime is also a good time to support children in developing healthy habits, including eating a variety of foods and knowing when they feel hungry and when they feel full.





What do you remember about mealtime from your childhood?

(2) What did food represent in your family and your culture?

How do you experience mealtime now as a caregiver?

(4) What would an ideal mealtime look, smell and feel like today in your home? How would you and your child interact?

LEARN



Children are born knowing when they are hungry and when they are full – this is called satiety. Many of us adults have unlearned this. Studies show that young children know how much they need to eat, but at around age five or six, children often start tuning out signals from their bodies, and focusing more on external signals, like portion sizes and messages from adults about being good eaters. Forcing children to clean their plates does not help them stay connected to their satiety cues.

Children often reject new foods at first. They may need to be offered new foods at least 10-15 times. The more often kids are offered food, the more likely they are to like that food! But, the way we offer new foods makes a big difference. Forcing children to eat a new food does not help them like that new food.

We invite caregivers to try a mealtime strategy called the **Division of Responsibility** (Ellyn Satter, 2014), to take the pressure off ourselves and our kids – **YOU provide and THEY decide. The caregiver is responsible for the WHAT, WHEN and WHERE of eating and feeding and the child decides WHETHER to eat the food offered and HOW MUCH to eat of the food offered.**



- There is a tremendous amount of research on the benefits of family meals. This research focuses less on what is eaten and more about what happens when children and caregivers spend that time together. These benefits include stronger familial relationships, demonstration of positive values, academic success, healthy food selections, and less high-risk behaviors down the road as teens. So we invite caregivers to eat with their children as often as their schedule allows. It doesn't have to be the perfect home cooked dinner — connecting over cereal counts too.
- Offering meals and snacks at around the same time each day can make it easier for children to stay in touch with their feelings of hunger and fullness.
- Caregivers can support children to stay in touch with their satiety cues by modeling their own reflections of **feeling hungry and full** throughout the meal.
- Allowing children to decide whether and how much to eat of the foods offered can support positive, lower stress mealtimes, and in the long run, build healthier eaters. When children are trusted to decide whether and how much to eat, they are more likely to stay in touch with their internal satiety cues about hunger and fullness. And they're more likely to develop a taste for a variety of foods.





Here is a little more information about how to try the Division of Responsibility.

Fill in this table to plan the WHAT, WHEN and WHERE of your family mealtime. Then allow children to decide the WHETHER and HOW MUCH.

There is no need to be a short order cook. Try to have at least one thing that you know your child likes, as it makes adding new foods less pressure, for both caregiver and child. (At least they ate something.)

You decide what is offered for meals & snacks.	You set the schedule for meals & snacks.	You decide where children will eat their meals & snacks.
WHAT	WHEN	WHERE
Breakfast: Ex: Cereal and banana	7:00	Home at kitchen table
Lunch:		
Dinner:		
Snack:		

WHETHER and HOW MUCH

In this example the child could eat the cereal and leave the banana.



Mindful Eating Exercise

Use your five senses to explore a food of your choice.

Begin by exploring a small piece of food, using as many of your senses as possible.

- Close your eyes and imagine you have never encountered this food before.
- Mold it in your hand(s), notice the texture, the density.
- Open your eyes. Examine the details of the food... What do you see?
- Touch the food to your mouth... Is there any taste? Does it feel differently on your lips that it does in your hand?
- Take a teeny tiny bite... What do you taste?
 What sensations are you feeling in your
 mouth? Take a larger bite & chew it 10 times...
 What do you notice?
- 6 Finally, look at the inside of the food you've bitten into, and repeat your exploration.



Complete this sentence...

One meal or food that transports me to a feeling of happiness or contentment is

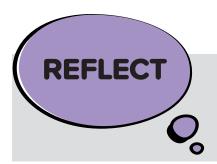
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Session 6

THE POWER OF PLAY

Play is how children learn and express themselves.

Active play time, like dancing or running in the park, improves children's **physical development**. Playing alone helps children learn **independence**; playing with peers helps children learn to **take turns**, **share**, **and socialize**; and playing with a parent or other adult helps children **develop vocabulary**, **learn social norms**, **and feel special and loved**.





What do you remember from playing with your parents or caregivers when you were a child?

(2) What does it look like when you play with your child now?

How do you feel when you are in charge and people follow your lead?

LEARN

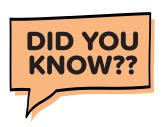


All children need a certain amount of attention. If they do not get attention for the positive and appropriate things they do, they'll do almost anything to try to get attention with negative behaviors. By playing with your child, you are showering them with positive attention that contributes to their development and your relationship.

We invite parents to play with their children for at least 10 minutes every day using a strategy, called **FUN skills**, that lets children be "in charge" and gives them powerful positive attention.

- **FOLLOW** your child's lead.
- (U)"U" do what your child does.
- N NARRATE or say what you see and hear.

For many adults, playing with children doesn't come naturally. That's okay! Do your best to relax and have fun.



- Young children are curious and creative. They are eager to explore at home and at school, and they love to "make believe" as a way to make sense of the world around them.
- Children who have special playtime with their parents and caregivers as a part of their daily routine have a greater capacity for following directions, have better relationships with other kids and adults, and do better in school.
- Doctors recommend that children get one hour of active play every day, and that caregivers make a plan for screen time and media use. A plan can help caregivers be more aware of what children are watching/playing and ensure screens are not displacing important activities, such as sleep, family time, and exercise.





Here is more information about how to use **FUN skills** with young children!

F FOLLOW your child's lead.

Let your child be in charge of what they want to play with and what they want to do (e.g., your child saying, "Let's dance!" or "Wear this hat.").

Try to be open and enjoy it when your child is silly or creative (e.g., "My bubbles are going to the moon.").

Avoid asking a lot of questions or correcting what your child says.

(U) "U" do what your child does.

If your child is building with blocks, you build, too. If they're driving cars, you drive, too. This is less about imitating and more about joining in!

(N) NARRATE or say what you see and hear!

This might seem strange at first, but it's a very powerful way to give attention to your child and most children will eventually love it!

You can try acting like a sportscaster:

"You're using a stethoscope to listen to my heart." Or repeat what your child says, like a parrot.

Child: "I am checking your heart."

Parent: "Yes, you are checking my heart."

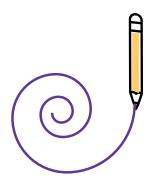


Let go of the thoughts consuming your mind and just color (in or out of the lines!).



Complete this sentence...

I feel joy when



Express yourself.
Write. Draw.
This book is yours!

Session 7

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT & STICKER CHARTS

Positive reinforcement is about catching your child being good! It is the most effective way to **teach children to repeat behaviors** we want to see more.

When you praise or give positive attention for a specific behavior, children learn that this type of behavior is important to you, and they are more likely to repeat that behavior. Praise helps children work hard to learn new skills and keep trying even when they are frustrated. Children who are praised for effort learn to encourage themselves to work hard.

A sticker chart is a specific way to give positive reinforcement. Using a sticker chart, you can list behaviors that you want your child to do more often, and give stickers when they do those behaviors.





When you were a child, how often were you praised by adults in your family? How did you feel when you were praised (or not)?

How does this affect how you think about positive reinforcement and praise with your children?

LEARN



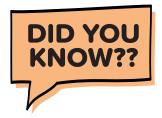
There are three types of positive reinforcement.

- **Praise:** any expression of approval. Praise can teach persistence. Praising children for not giving up encourages them to work through challenging tasks so that, when they are successful, they learn that effort can lead to success. Examples: smiles, high-fives, saying "Great job!" or "Wow, you did it!"
- **Privileges:** an activity or opportunity that your child doesn't always have -something special that your child will get excited about. **Examples:** going to the park together, or an extra story at bedtime.
- Material rewards: anything your child can see or hold, and gets excited about. **Examples:** stickers or small toys.

With all types of positive reinforcement it is important to understand the difference between a reward and a bribe.

- Rewards are given AFTER the desired behavior. ("When you clean up your toys, then you can watch that episode."). This motivates children to do what is expected.
- Bribes come BEFORE the desired behavior. ("Well, okay, but if I let you watch now, you have to clean up your toys after!"). With bribes, parents can lose the power to motivate.

It is important to decide what good behaviors you want to see more of, and reward your child when you see these behaviors. Focus on new skills and effort (rather than qualities like being smart).



- When children are first learning new behaviors, they need to be reinforced every time they do them. You can help make this connection when you praise by adding "WOW! That is something to be proud of!" or "I bet that feels really good!" Gradually, children develop intrinsic (or internal) motivation to behave well. Over time, you don't need to "catch" them every time with praise and stickers.
- It is best not to use food as a reward for good behavior. Giving sweet treats as rewards may teach children to eat even when they are not hungry. It can also be confusing for children. Food is not something that children should have to earn. We want children to trust that they will be fed no matter how they behave.





Young children learn best when they are told exactly what behaviors their caregivers would like to see. They are motivated to work hard when they know they will earn stickers and praise. Sticker charts make it fun because they can see their progress.

Create a sticker chart! You can use a printed sticker chart or simply a piece of paper.

- Choose three behaviors. Include at least one behavior that your child does well, and at least one behavior that is new or difficult.
- Write the behaviors on the chart. The behaviors should be specific, positive (tell your child what to do instead of what not to do), and easy to observe, so it is clear when the child has done the behavior and earned a sticker.

Instead of: "Be safe on the street."

Say: "Hold hands until we are safely at the park."

- > Use visuals, so if you put 'brush teeth' on the chart, draw (or cut from a magazine) a picture of a toothbrush. Invite your child to decorate the chart with you.
- Be consistent. Every time your child does something on the chart, give specific praise and a sticker!
- Don't remove any earned stickers. Removing earned stickers (or threatening to do so) can discourage children from continuing to work hard for their stickers.
- Review your child's progress every night as part of your routine. This is an opportunity to praise their progress and encourage them to keep working hard.
- Remember that it takes time for children to master new behaviors.
- After you have used a sticker chart for two weeks or more, you may want to add a "rewards menu" to keep your child motivated. A rewards menu shows a child what they can earn for a certain number of stickers. **Example:** two stickers = extra story at bedtime, five stickers = movie night.

Charts work very well for steps in a routine or other responsibilities, like setting the table, making your bed, or putting away your backpack. You can also include social and emotional skills, like using words to express feelings.

Here is an example of a sticker chart!

BEHAVIOR	MON	TUES	WEDS	THURS	FRI
Make your bed	★	†		\uparrow	
Take a breath when you're upset			*		*
Help your sister put away toys	*				

Sticker Chart

What three behaviors will you include in a sticker chart for your child?



If you had your own sticker chart:

- What behavior or skill would you include that you are doing really well?
- (2) Which behavior or skill are you still working on?

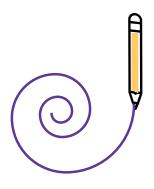
3 What would your own reward menu include?

During times of high stress, you may have less patience and less capacity to positively reinforce. And, children under stress are more likely to "act out." It is important to be kind to yourself, name what you are doing well, recognize your limits, and just do your best!



Complete this sentence...

One praise I love to hear is



Express yourself.
Write. Draw.
This book is yours!

Session 8

PREVENTING MILD MISBEHAVIOR

Young children are going to "misbehave" or behave in ways that are challenging. As frustrating as this can feel, **misbehaving is one way children learn, over time, what is okay to do, and what is not**. And while this is developmentally appropriate, we can use proactive strategies to decrease these mild misbehaviors.

Preventing misbehavior can be easier than disciplining misbehavior once it occurs. Proactive strategies can help **set your child up for success** and help you avoid some of the frustrations of challenging behaviors. They reduce the number of times you have to repeat yourself, and give children opportunities to meet your expectations and be praised for positive behavior.





What are some specific situations or times of the day when your child tends to misbehave or show challenging behaviors?

(2) How do you usually respond to them?

LEARN



Proactive strategies help prevent misbehaviors from happening in the first place – setting your child up for success before challenges begin. Below are a few proactive strategies to try:

- **Effective instructions** It is hard for children to do what is expected when they don't know exactly what that is. Young children are most likely to follow instructions when you do the following:
 - Be specific. Tell your child exactly what it is you want them to do.

 Example: "Walk in the house," versus "Don't run in the house."
 - Use statements instead of questions. Don't make it sound like an option.

 Example: "Please clean up," instead of "Do you want to clean up?"
 - Use a calm, firm voice, rather than yelling.
 - Make eye contact or get on their level so they are more able to hear and pay attention.
 - Give your child time to process what you say.

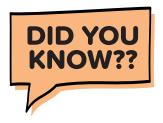
 Count to five before you repeat yourself.
 - Give one instruction at a time.

 Example: "Go brush your teeth," instead of "Go get dressed, eat breakfast and brush your teeth."
- **Pamily rules** These rules teach your child which behaviors are expected of them. Young children will have a hard time remembering more than three, and you are more likely to be consistent with a smaller number of important rules. When deciding which rules to focus on, consider:
 - Safety: Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
 - ★ Values: We share what we have. We tell the truth.
 - Social Skills: We help each other.

Remember to model and practice exactly what these behaviors look and feel like.

- **Make it fun** Children are more likely to follow directions if they seem fun.
 - Add music to a potentially un-fun task!
 - Use challenges or "races" to make following directions more like a game.
 - You can ask if your child can finish a task, like getting dressed, by the time a song is finished.
- **Two-choice statements** These can be used when your child is struggling with an instruction, transition, or simply to replace any misbehavior. Give your child a "**choice**" of two acceptable behaviors as options to replace their misbehavior. "Choosing" gives them a sense of control, but you are providing only acceptable options.

If your child wants to go to the park but is refusing to put on their coat, you can say: "Your choices are to put on your coat so we can go to the park, or to stay inside."



- Caregivers of young children, on average, give 17 instructions every half hour. That is more than 400 times each day! And for children who display a lot of challenging behaviors, the number rises to an average of 40 in a half hour that is almost 1,000 each day! Most young children follow one out of every three instructions given to them.
- Announcing transitions is important because young children like to know what comes next. Plus, some children are especially sensitive to being abruptly removed from something fun. When children have a chance to prepare, they are more likely to make the transition smoothly.





Reflect on the question below to see how proactive strategies can support you and your child.

What games, songs or activities does your child like? How can you use these to help your child follow directions or transition from one thing to another?

How do you usually give instructions to your child? How can you make your instructions more effective?

- What three rules do you want to prioritize for your family? When deciding which rules to focus on, consider: safety, family values, and the social skills you'd like your child to build or strengthen.

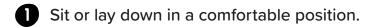
Make a family rules chart with your child and other members of the family. Have your child hang it somewhere visible for everyone to see and refer to.

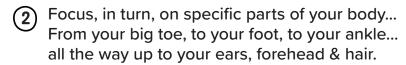
FAMILY RULES



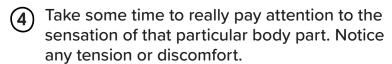
What are some ways you can ground yourself? Notice how you feel as you begin.

Body Scan









You can also try simply relaxing each body part instead of focusing on the sensation.





Complete this sentence...

One way I can manage my stress when my child misbehaves is

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Session 9

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH BIG FEELINGS

Young children develop the skills to identify, understand and manage their feelings over time. When children are struggling with big emotions it is natural for them to hit, throw things, yell, cry, hide or refuse to talk. In these moments, a child's mind and body are overwhelmed and they are trying to make sense of their experience.

To learn the skills to calm their bodies and minds, young children need the help of caring adults. **Children learn how to manage their emotions through supportive interactions with their caregivers**. It's our job to help them learn to use their words, calm their bodies, and ask for help when they need it.





Growing up, how did your family and community express and respond to feelings? Were some feelings acceptable, while others were not?

How comfortable are you expressing big feelings (sadness, fear, shame, joy, curiosity, anger) now?

How comfortable are you when your child expresses big feelings?

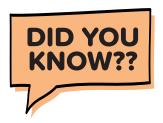
How do you think different expectations (family, cultural, social) impact what feelings and reactions are acceptable for children?

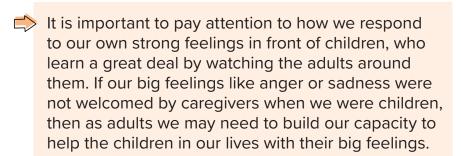
LEARN



Teaching children about feelings includes:

- Supporting them in identifying all their different feelings
- Nurturing their feelings
- Teaching them to use coping skills and handle their feelings in healthy ways
- Coping skills include anything that helps someone distract themselves, relax, or use self-talk to calm down.
- Distraction involves engaging in an activity not related to the situation and can include reading a book, taking a walk, or listening to music.
- Relaxation can mean taking slow deep breaths or letting go of tension by shaking out your arms and legs.
- Positive self-talk involves saying simple statements to yourself. You might model this for your child with examples, including "I can do it" and "I am proud of myself."





When children get support from an adult to help them calm down it is called co-regulation.

Co-regulation might look like using a calm voice, or taking deep breaths together when your child is upset.





Try the FEEL Technique with your child.





on feelings





possible solutions





the child to pick a solution





LEARN from it

Share this poem with your family.



Our Feelings Poem

Feelings come and feelings go
Just like rain or sun or snow
We all have feelings every day
And all our feelings are OK!

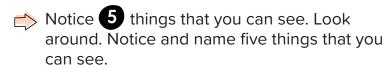






Paying attention to our senses helps us focus on the present moment.

Notice how you feel as you begin.





Notice 4 things that you can feel. Tune in to your sense of touch. Notice and describe the texture, temperature, or sensation of four things you can touch.

Notice 3 things you can hear. Listen carefully. What do you notice in the background? Notice and name three sounds you hear in your environment.

Notice (2) things you can smell. What do you notice? Is there a cooling sensation in your nostrils as you breathe in? Notice and name two smells you recognize.

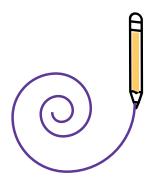
Notice thing you can taste. Focus and name one thing that you can taste right now. You can take a sip or bite of something, or simply notice the current taste in your mouth.



Complete this sentence...

When I feel overwhelmed, I can

59



Express yourself. Write. Draw. This book is yours!

Session 10

DISCIPLINE CHOICES

Raising young children is very challenging, and that's especially true when it comes to discipline. Discipline refers to the tools and strategies caregivers use to **stop or decrease behaviors they don't want to see from their children**. Through discipline, children are also taught skills that support them to manage their emotions and behaviors – helping them build the self-discipline skills that will support them **throughout their lives**.

When we think about discipline, many of us are actually thinking about punishment. Punishment may involve inflicting pain, emotional or physical, on a child. Punishment focuses on the person and attempts to force children to change their future behavior by making them "pay for their mistakes" and often uses fear or shame as a motivator. Discipline focuses on the behavior and supports children in learning from their mistakes.





Can you think of a time you were disciplined versus punished? What was that like?

(2) What do you want your child to learn from being disciplined? What are your goals when you discipline your child?

What strategies have you tried or seen family or friends use? Which of these strategies works for you?

LEARN



Because no single discipline strategy works for every child, having different options available to you can help.

The following strategies, **Active Ignoring and Effective Follow-Through**, support children to both change their behavior and to learn from their mistakes without subjecting them to pain, shame or fear.

Active Ignoring focuses on taking attention away to stop attention-seeking behaviors like interrupting or whining.

Start ignoring right away.

- Say, "You are not (behavior you want to see)... I will ignore you until you stop."
- Turn away from your child. Do not make eye contact or give any indication that their behavior is affecting you.
- Do something else, but keep an eye on your child so that you are aware if they start to do anything dangerous.

(2) Keep ignoring as long as it takes.

- Expect the misbehavior to get worse (often louder) before the child learns that it will not get your attention.
- To test if parents really mean it when they're not paying attention, children will often "turn up the volume." If you start to ignore but then "give in" and pay attention, your children will learn that they simply need to misbehave more or for a longer time in order to get your attention. They are smart little ones!

3 When your child stops, you stop ignoring – and give positive attention!

- immediately, say "I see you using your inside voice. What did you want to tell me?"
- This may be difficult if you are annoyed at your child, but it is really important in order to teach them what behaviors do and do not work to get your attention.

Effective Follow-Through involves

providing consequences for not following instructions.

Give an effective instruction

"It's time to clean up. Put your toys in the box."





Child follows instruction



Child does not follow instruction

Repeat the instruction with a warning:

"If you do not clean your toys up now, there won't be enough time and you will not be able to watch TV."



Child does not follow instruction

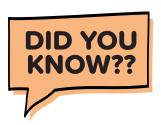


Give a consequence.

"You did not clean up, so now you do not have time for 30 minutes of TV."



"Great job putting your toys in the box!"



- Not all behaviors require direct action on your part. You can also simply allow your child to experience the natural and logical consequences of their misbehavior. (For instance, if a child is rough with their toys and breaks one, then they have to play with a broken toy. The caregiver will not replace it.)
- Siving a warning helps children develop self-control because it gives them a chance to change their behavior.





Reflect on how Active Ignoring and Effective Follow-Through might help you decrease unwanted behaviors.



What do you think will be the most difficult part about implementing Active Ignoring with your child? What are some ways you can deal with those difficulties?

What are some common misbehaviors your child exhibits? Can you think of how you might utilize Effective Follow-Through to address the misbehavior? Brainstorm what you might say to your child.

When practicing Active Ignoring, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- It is important to decide which behaviors you will be able to tolerate ignoring.
- Ignoring is very effective, but you might find that some of your child's behaviors are too annoying or too embarrassing for you to ignore. You may want to practice ignoring at home before you feel ready to ignore in public!
- · Be consistent!
- Get everyone on board!
- Be on the lookout for times when your child is engaging in positive behavior.



If you do decide to try either **Active Ignoring** or **Effective Follow-Through**, it is important to take care of yourself in the process. Challenging behaviors can make your body tense up, your hands clench, and anger rise up inside you.

Here are some things you can do when this happens:

- Talk to yourself: Use self-soothing statements ("I can do this!" or "It will get better").
- Breathe: Take some deep breaths. Focus on the air going in and out of your body.
- Taking a break: Stepping away from the situation for a moment can give you a much needed break.



Complete this sentence...

One thing I can say to myself in a challenging discipline moment is

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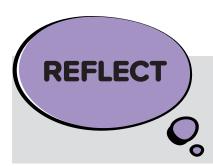
Session 11

TANTRUMS

A tantrum is a behavioral and/or emotional outburst. It is also a **form of communication** telling us that a child is experiencing **emotional distress**. Young children tend to tantrum when they want or need something they can't express with words. This is normal for children who are still learning to make sense of strong emotions like anger, frustration, sadness or disappointment and to recognize feelings in others.

Tantrums can be overwhelming for caregivers – making it difficult to think clearly and react calmly. Sometimes, in the face of a tantrum, it can be challenging to act in a way that is consistent with our beliefs or parenting goals because of how we're feeling, who is watching, or how stressed we are.

Taking time to reflect on these experiences can help you choose strategies to respond to tantrums that work for you, your children, and your family.





What does it look and feel like when you're overwhelmed or stressed out?

What thoughts or feelings come up for you when your child is having a tantrum?

3 Can you imagine focusing on the feeling instead of disciplining? Does it fit with your culture(s) or parenting style?

LEARN



Adults respond to tantrums based on a variety of factors. These include how we were raised, our own personality, our children's personalities and temperaments, and our beliefs about how children should act. Our family histories, personal experiences, and beliefs about how to parent also impact our responses to tantrums.

Even though all tantrums communicate the same thing (emotional distress), there are different types of tantrums. Below are some common tantrum behaviors, based on the work of Yamalis Diaz. Ph.D., 2021.

Prickly Porcupine



Mood Angry Irritable

Behaviors Aggressive May: yell, hit, insult, etc.

Sad Bunny



Anxious Fearful Sad

Behaviors May: cry or curl up

Stand Still **Turtle**



Mood Anxious Fearful **Behaviors** May: freeze, not respond

Freak Out Fox



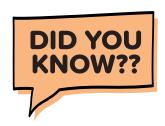
Panic **Behaviors** Restless May: appear worried or agitated

Silly Goose



Mood Overstimulated Hyperactive Sensory-seeking

Behaviors May: run around, climb, talk fast, etc.

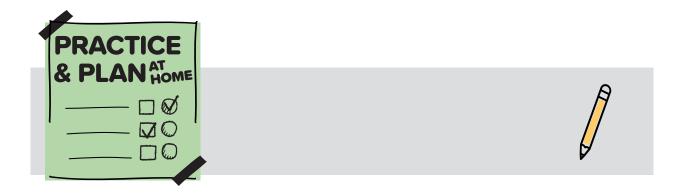




Many of the strategies we've discussed in other sessions are very helpful in **preventing tantrums**. For example, setting aside time to play with your child, giving reminders or warnings, having consistent routines in place, and teaching children how to identify and cope with feelings can all help to prevent tantrums.

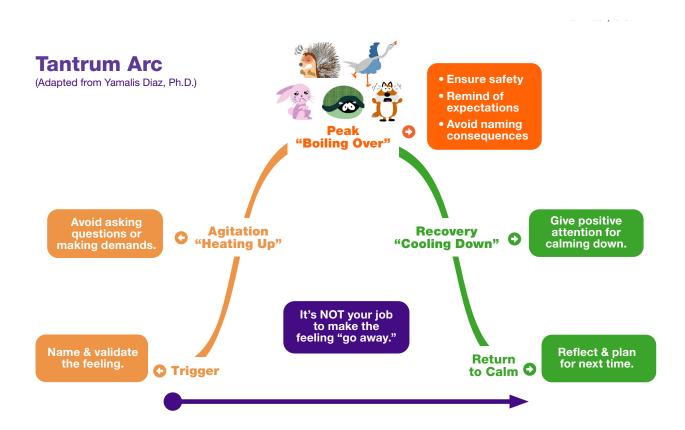


Just like adults, children can become overwhelmed by big emotions. And, just like adults, they all express these feelings differently. Whether your child is tearful and sad, or angry and yelling, the underlying cause of a tantrum is the same: an overwhelming emotion.



Even though they may look different for different children, tantrums generally follow a consistent arc (Yamalis Diaz, Ph.D., 2021):

- A heating up, when a child is becoming increasingly agitated
- A peak **boiling over point**, when those "tantrum behaviors" happen (e.g. Prickly Porcupine, Sad Bunny, etc.)
- And, finally, **cooling down**, when a child is coming back to a calmer state.



Which common tantrum behaviors (Freak Out Fox, Prickly Porcupine, Sad Bunny, Stand Still Turtle, Silly Goose) do you see from your child?

(2) What methods have you successfully used for calming down your child?



Managing our own emotions through a child's tantrum can be incredibly emotionally draining. Being gentle with yourself can help you refocus during stressful times and **feel good about the hard work of parenting**.

Take a moment and think about what you can say to yourself during stressful parenting or personal moments. What would you want your best friend or someone you really trust to say to you during these moments?



Complete this sentence...

When I am overwhelmed, I feel comforted by

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Session 12

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Parenting young children can be joyful and fulfilling. But it also involves hard work, continuous learning about yourself and your child, and real challenges.

We hope, through ParentCorps, that you have learned strategies to navigate the ups and downs of parenting, and found opportunities for **connection**, **community building**, **reflection**, **and support**. As you continue your parenting journey, it is important to celebrate the small wins and **take time to care for yourself**.

Self-care looks different for each of us. There is no right or wrong way to practice self-care. Taking care of yourself sustains your energy, and allows you to take care of your family the way you want to.





What have you learned about yourself as a parent or caregiver through this experience?

- What, if any, changes have you seen in your child's behavior? How about your own behavior/parenting?
- What strategies or ideas, that we or other caregivers have shared, will you continue trying in your family?

4 How do you take care of yourself?
How does your community care for one another?

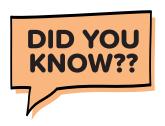
LEARN



Throughout this program we have learned strategies to support young children, and reflected on how our own experiences and circumstances influence our parenting.

We talked about:

- Supporting our children's growth and development.
- Proactive strategies, like routines and childled play, to build more safe, nurturing and predictable environments.
- Reinforcement strategies, like sticker charts and praise, to increase positive behaviors.
- Responsive strategies, like Active Ignoring and Effective Follow-Through, to decrease challenging behavior and support individualized needs.
- Lastly, self-care as a way to help yourself be able to show up the way you want to each day.



In recent years, self-care has been presented as something more luxurious and leisurely. However, the concept of self-care, first popularized in the 1970s and 80s, is rooted in activism. Writer and activist Audre Lorde said, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation." In this spirit, the Black community elevated self-care as a way to assert their worth and dignity by taking care of themselves, individually and collectively, in moments of crisis, grief, or change.





Self-care is very personal and individualized. Creating a plan for your self-care may help, as it is easy to drop taking care of yourself to the bottom of your priorities.

Self-care goals	When during your day or week can you engage in this activity? Can you make it part of your routine?	What support might you need to prioritize this?

- Tell those you take care of about your new self-care plan.
- Accept that it won't be perfect and that's okay! Just keep doing your best.
- Celebrate your wins! Treat yourself (and/or your kids) when you are able to succeed (bonus self-care!).

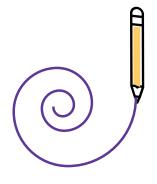


Plan to check-in with yourself every month to reflect on how you are taking care of yourself. This may look like setting reminders, or planning to talk about your self-care with a friend or loved one.



Complete this sentence...

One of my parenting strengths is



Express yourself. Write. Draw. This book is yours!

Thank you for joining our community!

I am enough.



Parenting is hard.

It can be full of joy and also frustration and worry.

There are no perfect people.

There are no perfect parents.

But I can be myself and that is enough.

My love is enough.

I am enough.